

# The Western Scot

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## THE VALUE OF NATURAL APTITUDE AND EFFICIENT TRAINING.

By Lieut.-Colonel Lorne Ross, Commanding 67th Pioneer Battalion, Western Scots.

The 4th Canadian Division has already become recognized as "the practical Division." The stress laid upon thorough, systematic training, the absence of fuss and feathers, unnecessary parades for show, the minimum requirements of men for guards and duties, combined with the strict insistence that every available man should be trained for fighting, is having a very noticeable effect already in the military efficiency and bearing of the men. Constant practice in musketry and trench digging, combined with instructive field days, under conditions as nearly identical as possible with the front, is rapidly getting the men of the Division in fighting shape for the important work ahead.

Major-General Watson, C.B., the General Officer Commanding, is first of all a business man, and has brought to his military duties the thorough and practical training so essential to the successful carrying out of the present war, which is recognized as one of organisation and equipment. His promotion to his present high command, which has been rapid, has been owing to the abundance of common sense he has displayed in dealing with the problems at the front, and to his clear grasp of the essentials of this war. The 4th Division is certainly fortunate in having its destiny entrusted to an officer of such outstanding ability.

Colonel Ironsides, D.S.O., the Chief of Staff, is recognized as an officer of strong personality and wide military attainment, and his practical dealing with the training of the Division and his constant reiteration of the vital importance of using common sense in dealing with military situations as they present themselves, has strongly impressed all ranks.

If there is any justification required that the training which the Western Scots underwent in Victoria was along the right line, it is abundantly proved in the syllabus of training as laid down in Bramshott for the 4th Canadian Division.

Colonel Ironsides, in his lecture to the officers and N.C.O.'s of this Battalion, the other afternoon, impressed everyone with his thorough knowledge of conditions at the front, and the importance of sizing up situations from a practical point of view. By apt illustrations, he showed clearly to everyone present why certain things were done at the front, not because they were laid down in text books (very often quite the reverse), but because practical experience had shown that they were right. His remarks were very instructive, and among many important points he brought home to his audience was the use and economy of salients in the line, in developing effective rifle fire and in localizing the enemy's attacks. He showed clearly the advantage of taking positions on commanding ground, the importance of placing support lines within easy access of the fire and command trenches, and how essential it was to have the reserve trenches sufficiently far in the rear that their wire entanglements should be out of effective shrapnel fire. The points he emphasised of adapting a man's ability to construct obstacles to the enemy's advance through the communication trenches will not be lost sight of by the men of the Western Scots, who are accustomed to overcoming natural obstacles in the Northern tracts of British Columbia.

This war has brought home to all thinking people the wonderful opportunities it presents to men of ability in

civil life who have entered the service. It is not so much a war of military tactics in theory, but a war of common sense, where a man's past life and experience in handling men and confronting new situations counts for very much.

What is required in this war is not so much the officer with the theory of warfare as laid down in past text books, but rather the officer who can conceive new ideas, work out better methods of doing things, find practical ways of tackling military problems, and who is not held back by any difficulties that may confront him, but will find a way of getting through or around them.

It will be to officers and men who have the physical endurance to stand hardships, the clear heads to think fast in emergencies, the courage to accept responsibility and the will to carry out the duties given them, that promotion and honours will be given. In this Battalion, where already ten officers have been given promotion from the ranks for merit, these factors will always count for promotion and advancement.

## Personal News in the Orders.

No. 102488 Sergt. R. L. Condy proceeded on command to London on 10.6.16, and will be attached to the Pay and Record Office.

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A recreation room was opened on June 14 for the convenience of the men of the 67th Pioneers. Sergt. H. S. Young, of Y.M.C.A., "Willows Renown," is in charge.

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No. 102408 Sergt. R. T. Roxburgh, "C" Co., has been granted permission by the Officer Commanding to marry at date 9.6.16.

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Extract from Aldershot Command Orders:—EXAMINATIONS: "Musketry."—The undermentioned officers and non-commissioned officers who attended at the Command School of Musketry, Thornhill, Aldershot, from April 18 to May 6, 1916, qualified in the 53rd Lewis Machine Gun Course:—

First-class Instructors, "Distinguished":—

Capt. S. H. O'Kell, 67th Batt. Canadian Regt.

Sergt. G. A. Baurle, 67th Batt. Canadian Regt.

Second-class Instructor:—

Sergt. A. J. Mills, 67th Batt. Canadian Regt.

The undermentioned officers and non-commissioned officer qualified in the 53rd Rifle Course:—

First-class Instructor, "Distinguished":—

Lieut. A. A. Gray, 67th Batt. Canadians.

Second-class Instructor:—

Sergt. H. W. Burton, 67th Batt. Canadians.

CONFIRMATION OF RANK:—

The following acting N.C.O.'s are confirmed in their rank (authority D.A.A.G. letters A.B. 3/26, 9.6.16):—

STAFF.

To be Orderly Room Sergt.-Major, 102001 E. F. Nicholls.

To be Batt. Quartermaster-Sergt., 102002 R. Macnicol.

To be Bandmaster Sergt., 103357 L. Turner.

To be Pipe-Major Sergt., 102529 W. J. Wishart

To be Sergeant O.R. Clerk, 102007 W. Young.

To be Sergeant Cook, 102382 R. M. MacMasters.

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